

Statement of Congressman Jim Costa (CA20)

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -"Today I voted for the Iraq resolution that has been debated on the floor of the House of Representatives this week.

"My vote was cast in support of American men and women in uniform who are fighting the War on Terrorism. The last three years have been frustrating for a majority of Americans based upon the goals that were represented to us both before and after Saddam Hussein was toppled. Weapons of mass destruction, the escalating cost and duration of the war are examples of issues that have not turned out as the Administration has claimed. Clearly, mistakes have been made but there has been a consistent lack of effort to acknowledge and correct those errors by the President. He must offer a new plan on how we are going to win this war and not simply more of the same.

"I believe that we must support the men and women of America's armed forces who are doing the hard work in harm's way. Further, the U.S. government has a moral and legal obligation to protect American citizens and the people of the free world in the War on Terrorism, but we cannot do it alone. That fight against terrorism could last as long as the Cold War, which began following World War II and lasted into the late 1980s.

“The debate in the House on the Iraq resolution has been frustrating because, by and large, it was not a discussion or debate, just hours of partisan speeches.

“Congress must undertake a bipartisan evaluation of America's involvement in fighting the War on Terrorism. Congress needs to take a long open look at what has gone right and wrong over the last three years in Middle East. America has seen 2500 military personnel lost; nearly 20,000 wounded and spent almost \$370 billion of taxpayer's money. The justification for this expenditure of the lives of America's best and brightest and the vast sums of money have been varied and inconsistent. Congress has an obligation to practice serious oversight on a matter of the highest importance to the American people. In my opinion ten hours of talk, without committee oversight, does not begin to touch the surface. Congress must do better; the American public deserves more.

“In order to succeed in Iraq and Afghanistan, I believe the links between military action in those countries and the War on Terrorism must be clearly established. All we've seen in the hours of talk over the Iraq resolution has been sloganeering; to the extent that the 'debate' does a disservice to America's military personnel who are putting their lives on the line and American taxpayers who are funding this effort.

“Congress should practice real oversight instead of supporting errors in leadership. The checks and balances in our system are missing in action.”

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